

DRE Warns of Phone Scams Targeting Consumers and Licensees

Sacramento, California – The California Department of Real Estate (DRE) urges consumers and licensees to be aware of reports of scammers purporting to be a DRE employee via telephone in an effort to con consumers in a real estate transaction.

Consumers and real estate agents should be vigilant about verifying details when receiving unsolicited calls regarding real estate transactions and matters.

If there is a DRE matter of concern, initial contact from DRE will be via letter on DRE letterhead. DRE will not reach out to you by telephone, text or email for its initial contact.

What the Phone Scam Can Look Like

1. An **unsolicited call** related to selling or buying your home or discussing other details of your real estate transactions.
2. An unsolicited call related to your current real estate transaction declaring they are **attempting to resolve a commission dispute**.
3. The impersonator asks you to call them back as soon as possible, **rushing the consumer** with the goal of causing a sense of urgency, uncertainty, worry, or fear.
4. The fraudster requests to communicate by **text only**.
5. During the call, the fraudster can request the electronic transferring of money, requests for cash, and other similar asks.
6. The fraudster claiming there is a pending disciplinary action against you and demands payment to avoid license revocation or restriction.

Steps to Protect Yourself

Always Verify Details

Scammers promote high-return real estate investments that are either nonexistent or misrepresented, leading to financial losses for investors.

Contact Your Real Estate Agent

If the call is unsolicited, contact your real estate agent to verify the identity of the caller and other details.

Ask Questions

Consumers should always ask questions and never feel rushed or pushed to make a quick decision. Take your time and if you feel under pressure, that may be a red flag.

Contact DRE

If you receive an unsolicited call from someone purporting to be a DRE employee, ask for verification. When in doubt, contact DRE at: <https://dre.ca.gov/Contact.html>.

Consumers need to know that requests for advance fees (fees or money before services are performed), payments in cash, and "wire transfers" of monies are all warning signs of fraud.

How Consumers Can Report Suspected Fraud

If you believe you have been a victim of a real estate crime, suspect predatory behavior in your real estate transaction, or have a concern or complaint about a real estate salesperson or broker, you can file a complaint with DRE:

<https://dre.ca.gov/Consumers/FileComplaint.html>